

**THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI**

**IN THE MATTER OF A CRIMINAL
COMPLAINT AGAINST
MARK NICHOLAS COBB**

Case No. 20-mj-2015DPR

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Brian Martin, being first duly sworn, do hereby depose and state that:

1. This affiant is a Task Force Officer (TFO) with United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Springfield, Missouri. I have been employed as a Barry County, Missouri, Deputy Sheriff since 1997 and a sworn law enforcement officer since 1985. I am also currently a TFO with the Southwest Missouri Cyber Crimes Task Force (SMCCTF) in Joplin, Missouri. I have been assigned to investigate computer crimes, including violations against children. I have gained expertise in the conduct of such investigations through training in seminars, classes, and everyday work related to conducting these types of investigations. I have attended training provided by the FBI Cyber Crime Division, the FBI's Regional Computer Forensic Laboratory, and the Missouri Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. I have written, executed, and assisted in over 200 search warrants on the state and federal level.
2. As part of this affiant's duties with HSI, this affiant investigates criminal violations relating to child exploitation, child pornography, and coercion and enticement, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2251, 2252(a), 2252A, and 2422. This affiant has received training in the areas of child pornography, child exploitation, and human trafficking.
3. The statements in this affidavit are based on personal observations, training and experience,

investigation of this matter, and information obtained from other agents and witnesses. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of securing a criminal complaint, this affiant has not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. The affiant has set forth the facts necessary to establish probable cause to believe that Mark Nicholas Cobb has violated 18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(2), that is, receipt and distribution of child pornography.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

4. 18 U.S.C. § 2252 prohibits a person from knowingly transporting, shipping, receiving, distributing, reproducing for distribution, or possessing any visual depiction of minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct when such visual depiction was either mailed or shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce by any means, including by computer, or when such visual depiction was produced using materials that had traveled in interstate or foreign commerce.

PROBABLE CAUSE

5. On September 16, 2017, CyberTip 24304646 was initiated after Choncy Murray contacted the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to report that his nine-year-old son had been contacted by an adult male, “Mark,” through an Android phone application, “Secretchattalktostrangers,” a communication and social media application. Murray reported that he had discovered the chats, and “Mark” had sent his son pornography, requested pictures from his son, and talked about meeting the child.

6. The CyberTip reported that the nine-year-old minor was using the name “Ciera,” and the user ID was 18d5b50. The suspect was using the screenname “Mark” and identified as a 55-year-old male. The user ID for the suspect was 5affb08, and the user’s phone number was (417) 340-0623.

7. This affiant received the CyberTip for follow-up investigation. While searching social media websites using phone number (417) 340-0623, a Facebook profile in the name “Mark Cobb” was located at “<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100013777112557>.” The profile had nothing visible on the timeline and little information in the “About” section.

8. On November 16, 2017, this affiant contacted HOUSE, Inc. after SMCCTF TFO Lee Walker received information that a Mark Cobb (hereinafter “Cobb”) was in their alcohol treatment program. This affiant spoke with admissions coordinator Steve Mickels to see if Cobb was in the program, and it was confirmed he was. TFO Walker and this affiant went to the main campus of HOUSE, 24730 State Highway 171, Webb City, Missouri, 64870. Personnel attempted to locate Cobb, but were unable to do so. Another resident in the program reported that Cobb had left the previous evening, but Cobb did not notify any of the staff that he was leaving, and he did not sign himself out. This affiant’s further attempts to locate Cobb were unsuccessful.

9. On March 5, 2019, CyberTip 47300917 was initiated by Facebook after they discovered a Facebook Messenger chat session they believed contained possible images of child pornography. Upon discovering the file, Facebook notified NCMEC.

10. Facebook identified the suspect profile name as “Mark Cobb,” located at “<https://www.facebook.com/mark.cobb.54966>.” The user listed a birth date of December 6, 1961. The email listed for the account was “mcobb7315@gmail.com.” The file was uploaded on March 4, 2019, at 00:08:55 PST, from IP address 2600:100a:b012:e8a3:6316:7e08:afc:9b08, a Verizon Communications IP address. Further investigation by NCMEC indicated that this CyberTip was possibly related to CyberTip 24304646. A comparison of the profile images for the two Facebook profiles were very similar. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special

Agent (SA) Rebecca Moloney, the NCMEC liaison, sent a subpoena to Google to obtain any information related to the email address “mcobb7315@gmail.com.” Google’s return provided the subscriber as “Mark Cobb,” with a phone number of (417) 952-7357. SA Moloney also sent a subpoena to Verizon for subscriber information. Verizon responded and the return identified the subscriber as Mark Cobb, 1312 South Byers, Joplin, Missouri.

11. This affiant reviewed the CyberTip and the images submitted by Facebook, which Facebook had already viewed. The files appear to be the same image, but have different filenames. The image depicts a prepubescent child, probably no older than three, with an erect adult penis in the child’s mouth. The other file sent with the CyberTip appears to be the profile picture from the Facebook profile for the Mark Cobb account. A check of the Missouri Department of Revenue Driver License Files located a license for a Cobb. The Facebook profile picture matches the individual in the driver’s license picture. SMCCTF TFO Matt Smith originally received the CyberTip for further investigation; however, he was unable to locate Mark Cobb after attempting to make contact.

12. On December 17, 2019, Google initiated CyberTip 61308664 with NCMEC after Google had discovered a file containing possible child pornography stored on their servers in a Google Photos account.

13. In the CyberTip, Google reported that the account user name was “Mark Cobb,” associated with email address “mcobb7315@gmail.com.” This was the same email address provided by Facebook in CyberTip 47300917. Google provided several months of login IP addresses. Prior to Google discovering the images on December 17, 2019, the most recent IP addresses include 47.214.21.37, a Suddenlink IP address on December 4, 2019; 47.214.24.115 between October 1, 2019, and October 15, 2019, a Suddenlink IP address; and

2602:304:681b:8d29:6187:2ad7:fe45:3370 on August 10, 2019, between 00:14:28 and 00:14:29 GMT, an AT&T U-verse IP address. Google reported that one file of suspected child pornography had been uploaded to the Mark Cobb Google Photo account. Google submitted the one file with the report.

14. On February 7, 2020, the CyberTip was forwarded to this affiant for further investigation. This affiant reviewed the file, which had been previously viewed by Google, and it appears to be from one of the LS Models series, or a similar site, depicting a prepubescent female, less than twelve years of age, lying on her side with one leg up, displaying her breasts and her vaginal area.

15. This affiant sent an investigative subpoena to Suddenlink for subscriber information for IP address 47.214.21.37 on December 4, 2019, which was the most recent IP address. On February 20, 2020, Suddenlink responded to the subpoena and identified the subscriber of IP address 47.214.24.37 as Daniel Cobb, 4005 Red Oak Road, Merriam Woods Village, Missouri, 65740. Through the course of the investigation, it was determined that Daniel Cobb is Cobb's brother.

16. On February 20, 2020, this affiant contacted Taney County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) Deputy Danny Stottle to see if he or his agency had any information concerning Cobb. Deputy Stottle reported that the TCSO recently had contact with Cobb at 4005 Red Oak Road, Merriam Woods Village, Missouri 65740 regarding a report of possible sexual abuse involving a juvenile male. TCSO Deputy Robert Stirewalt was dispatched that day to check on the well-being of the child. Deputy Stirewalt arrived at the residence and spoke with Cobb.

17. On February 24, 2020, this affiant applied for and received a search warrant for 4005 Red Oak Road, Merriam Woods Village, Missouri 65740. On February 25, 2020, this affiant and other

members of the SMCCTF, HSI, and TCSO executed the search warrant. Upon arrival, this affiant was able to make contact with Cobb. In a post-*Miranda* interview, Cobb admitted to receiving and distributing child pornography through the use of the Internet and his cellular phone, a Motorola E5, which was manufactured outside the state of Missouri and would have had to cross state lines to enter. When asked specifically about the chat messages in CyberTip 24304646, Cobb said he could not specifically recall those chats, but he admitted he had been chatting with minors on the Internet.

18. During a forensic preview of the Motorola E5 cellular phone, law enforcement located images of child pornography and images depicting Cobb, nude and laying on his bed with two minor males, who are identified to be five and six years old. Cobb is masturbating in these images while lying next to the minors.

CONCLUSION

19. Based on the above facts, this affiant believes there is probable cause in support of a criminal complaint against Mark Nicholas Cobb for violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(2), that is, receipt and distribution of child pornography.



Brian Martin
Task Force Officer
Homeland Security Investigations

Subscribed and sworn before me this 25th day of February 2020.



David P. Rush
Chief Magistrate Judge
Western District of Missouri